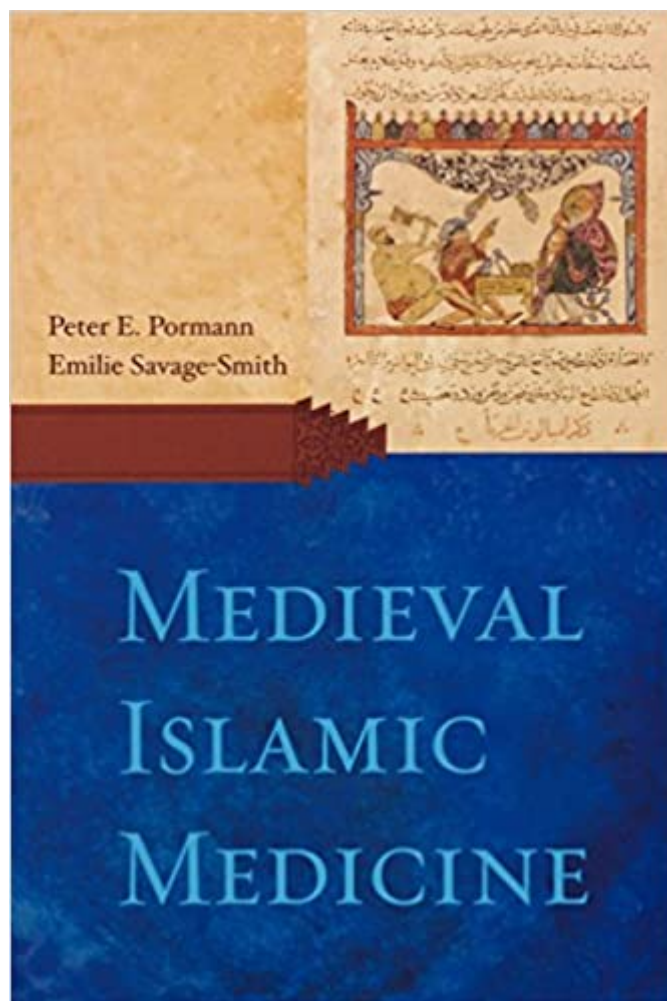


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# Medieval Islamic Medicine



## Synopsis

The medical tradition that developed in the lands of Islam during the medieval period (c. 650-1500) has, like few others, influenced the fates and fortunes of countless human beings. It is a story of contact and cultural exchange across countries and creeds, affecting many people from kings to the common crowd. This tradition formed the roots from which modern Western medicine arose. Contrary to the stereotypical picture, medieval Islamic medicine was not simply a conduit for Greek ideas, but a venue for innovation and change. Medieval Islamic Medicine is organized around five topics: the emergence of medieval Islamic medicine and its intense crosspollination with other cultures; the theoretical medical framework; the function of physicians within the larger society; medical care as seen through preserved case histories; and the role of magic and devout religious invocations in scholarly as well as everyday medicine. A concluding chapter on the "afterlife" concerns the impact of this tradition on modern European medical practices, and its continued practice today. The book includes an index of persons and their books; a timeline of developments in East and West; and a section on further reading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The authors take a fresh approach and offer imaginative conclusions." •ISIS"Without question, this volume can be considered the best and most critical introduction to the field and a guide for future research. . . . Anyone interested in the history of Islamic science will find this a useful book to own." •American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences

"An outstanding contribution to a very important field. While there has been a great deal of new research on premodern medical texts from the Islamic world, there are few surveys written for a broader public. This text will make a lasting contribution to the history of science in general, and to the study of premodern Islamic medicine in particular." •Jonathan Brockopp, Director, Program in Religious Studies, Pennsylvania State University

Very interesting and well written. Ook

I read this book because even though a lay person, I have a great deal of interest in medicine and medical history as well as theology and philosophy, I'm working on learning and understanding more about Islam, and I am an old friend of one of the authors, Prof. Savage-Smith. This book is fascinating in terms of the methodology used by the authors to learn about and come to conclusions about this history, including a tracing of roots, as well as the methods used in medieval times for medical practices. Lots of details and yet lots of main themes to give perspective. Even though very specialized, I think it is quite interesting.

I came across Pormann's *Islamic Medicine* while conducting a literature review for a thesis paper. I have a great deal of interest in the ancient and medieval medicine and the factors which contributed to the rise of early modern medicine. *Medieval Islamic Medicine* is a concise yet thorough account of the medical tradition which hailed from the Islamic empire between 600-1200 CE. The vast number of references following each chapter are particularly useful for those looking to read further beyond this treatise. The text itself is divided into the following major chapters: 1. Introduction 2. The Emergence of Islamic Medicine 3. Islamic Medical Theory 4. Islamic Physicians in Society 5. Surgical Advances, Hospitals and other technologies 6. The Afterlife There are a number of beautiful and interesting illustrations though regrettably they are printed in black and white. The author's prose is straightforward and quite easily digested by non-historians and the average layperson (such as myself). Though it provides just a glimpse into the medieval era of medicine as a whole, it does contain a number of fascinating tidbits and was a enjoyable read overall.

The authors weave a story about the medieval world (600-1500CE) and medieval medicine and bring their own research with the publications of other scholars. The story takes the reader on a journey to the medieval centers of Islamic knowledge: Cairo, Alexandria, Damascus and Baghdad.

The major cultures and religions, Moslems, Christians and Jews, ebb and flow across time and political boundaries. The two principal themes are the transmission and elaboration of the ancient medical texts of Galen and Hippocrates and their translation from Greek into Arabic, Hebrew and Latin. As Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, its physicians drew upon this reservoir of medical observations as they developed their own empiricism. This comprehensive book will be of great interest to readers who are new to the subject as well as those who wish to enhance their knowledge. The few illustrations are well chosen.

I had always a special interest for history of medicine but I was missing a clear comprehensive review of islamic medicine. Not any more. Well written, excellent documentation, not too much but enough. Thanks.

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